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CONGRESS PLANS tighter scrutiny of the CIA with Adm. Inman departing.

The retirement of the agency's respected No. 2 man raises concern about its doings. Lawmakers generally distrust CIA Director Casey. They complain he doesn't tell them what the agency is up to, particularly in the area of covert action. With Inman on the job, Congress could "sleep at night," one aide says. Now legislators will want to know more about any "dirty tricks."

But there's a "Catch-22," warns a congressional staffer. Lawmakers expect a harder time getting information now that Inman, their best source, is leaving. They doubt that his replacement, John McMahon, can challenge Casey on issues or exercise control over the agency. A possible result: Casey may get deeper into daily CIA operations that Inman has handled.

The U.S. may take a stiffer stand on verification of arms-control treaties. Inman showed faith in monitoring by satellite, but other officials think on-site inspection is a must.